

**If You Want to Know What's *Really* Going in
Jackson --
Put Down *The Daily Journal* and Try TV**

By: Senator Alan Nunnelee

As a father, I have always encouraged my three children to limit their TV viewing and spend more of their time reading. However, because of the coverage of the State Senate by *The Daily Journal*, I think it is time to recommend different habits to my constituents. If you want to know what's really going on in state government, you might want to watch more of the TV news and read less of *The Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal*.

Newspapers have opinion pages, and in those pages they have the right to their opinion. But it is in the biased coverage of their daily news reporting that I have problems with *The Daily Journal*. There have been significant disagreements between the Mississippi House and Senate on important issues in the last two years, and *The Daily Journal* has not covered those differences fairly. This opinion is shared by many who are on the ground everyday at the State Capitol.

Bias is not always the misreporting of facts. It can be applied by the way those facts are arranged and the importance given to certain facts over others. *The Daily Journal* makes sure not to misreport the figures involved with the state budget, but they also make sure to lead the reader to the conclusion with which *The Daily Journal* most agrees.

Despite increases in state education spending in recent years with virtually the same number of students, *The Daily Journal* Editorial Board has made it clear they think there is a magic funding number that must be met to make our kids smarter and anyone who disagrees with their number is against our public schools.

The Daily Journal Editorial Board has also made it clear that they believe Mississippi Medicaid – despite doubling in cost in five years -- should not be reformed except by blindly pumping more money in it – preferably from higher taxes.

While I disagree with these positions, I believe it is *The Daily Journal's* right to have them on their editorial pages. However, these positions are routinely supported each day in the news reporting of the paper. This is not a coincidence.

I have been a part of making some difficult choices for education and Medicaid over the last two years. Simply saying you are for more money for these important items will win you friends and better coverage at *The Daily Journal*, but I assure you it is not a solution. In fact, just seeking revenue instead of reform in education and Medicaid can actually be disastrous for the future of our schools and health care for our needy.

These are tough times in Jackson. There is a lot that needs to be fixed in state government. I don't ask for credit; and I don't ask to be spared criticism. As I work here each week on important issues, I just ask that what I and my senate colleagues do be reported fairly back home. Until that time comes, I will ask my friends and family to stay tuned to the local TV news.

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